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SUBJECT: FM KOUMURA PUSHES BURMA TO ACCEPT EARLY GAMBARI
VISIT

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: During bilateral talks with the Burmese Foreign Minister on January 17, FM Koumura emphasized that Burma needs to develop a stable and democratic country, bring about "concrete results" from talks with Aung San Suu Kyi, and allow UN Special Envoy Gambari to return to Burma "as soon as possible." Koumura stressed that delaying Gambari's return visit until April would be "too late" and emphasized that Burma needs to allow him to return "as soon as possible," MOFA contacts told Embassy Tokyo. Koumura reiterated Japan's deep regret over the murder of Japanese photographer Kenji Nagai in September, and said it is necessary for Burma and Japan to hold a follow-up meeting to further investigate the details surrounding his murder. End Summary.

¶2. (C) FM Koumura called on Burma to "take bold steps" to democratize and to improve its human rights situation during his third meeting with Burmese FM U Nyan Win on January 17, MOFA First Southeast Asia Division Principal Deputy Director Atsushi Kuwabara told Embassy Tokyo. Concrete steps to bring democracy to Burma, including progress on talks between the Burmese government and Aung San Suu Kyi, will benefit not just Burma, but the Mekong region overall, and is necessary for regional development and stability. The international community will continue to watch the situation in Burma closely, Koumura emphasized.

¶3. (C) Allowing UN Special Envoy Gambari to visit "as soon as possible" is one way Burma can signal to the international community that it is stepping up efforts to bring about concrete results on implementing democracy and improving human rights, Koumura explained. Burma needs to receive Gambari as soon as possible and it is unacceptable to wait until April, Koumura emphasized. Burmese FM U Nyan Win replied that it is "inconvenient" for Gambari to visit before mid-April and stated that "not enough time has passed since Gambari's November trip to Burma." In the interim, Burma will continue cooperate with the United Nations, he added. Mid-April is too late and Burma needs to receive Gambari "as soon as possible", Koumura reiterated.

¶4. (C) Koumura stressed Japan's deep regret over the murder of Japanese photo journalist Kenji Nagai on September 27 and said it is necessary to hold a follow-up meeting, to include Japanese forensic experts, to further investigate the details surrounding his murder. (Note: Kuwabara explained that Japanese officials met with Burmese representatives in December to discuss this, but said Japanese police continue

to assess Nagai was shot at a close range, whereas Burmese officials insist he was shot from far away. End Note). Burmese FM U Nyan Win replied that he was deeply sorry about Nagai's death, but that holding an additional meeting will not be beneficial since both sides have differing analysis on how Nagai died. MOFA is not optimistic that the Burmese will agree to an additional meeting, even if the Burmese Foreign Minister pledged to try to arrange it, Kuwabara surmised. SCHIEFFER